

CLAIMS

1. A method for providing a telephony session, the method including:

receiving an electronic mail request from a third party to provide the telephony session;

calling a customer in accordance with the request;

accessing a URL providing a VoiceXML application in accordance with the request;

running the VoiceXML application when the customer answers; and

responding to an interaction with the customer during the telephony session.

2. The method of Claim 1, further including storing the status of the telephony session for access by the third party.

3. The method of Claim 1, further including monitoring a plurality of telephony servers to determine availability for the telephony session.

4. The method of Claim 3, further including scheduling the telephony session for a predetermined time.

5. The method of Claim 3, further including prioritizing a plurality of telephony sessions.

6. The method of Claim 3, further including receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of third parties to provide a plurality of telephony sessions.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein the plurality of requests are dispatched to the plurality of telephony servers based on a semi-randomized selection process biased toward low load telephony servers.

8. The method of Claim 3, further including capturing a status of the telephony session.

9. The method of Claim 1, further including determining whether the request passes a policy check.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the policy check is set by the third party.

11. The method of Claim 9, wherein the policy check is set by the customer.

12. The method of Claim 9, wherein the policy check is set by a receiver of the request.

13. The method of Claim 1, further including reformatting the request for processing.

14. A system of providing a telephony session requested by a third party, the system including:

a telephony server for calling a first customer, accessing a URL providing a VoiceXML application, running the VoiceXML application when the first customer answers, and responding to an interaction with the first customer during the telephony session, wherein the telephony server configurably receives an incoming call from a second customer.

15. The system of Claim 14, further including:
a plurality of telephony servers as recited in Claim 14; and

an event queue interface for monitoring a status of each of the plurality of telephony servers to determine availability for the telephony session.

16. The system of Claim 15, further including an event scheduler for scheduling the telephony session for a predetermined time.

17. The system of Claim 15, further including means for prioritizing a plurality of telephony sessions.

18. The system of Claim 15, further including a gateway for receiving a request from the third party to provide the telephony session.

19. The system of Claim 18, wherein the request comprises an email.

20. The system of Claim 15, wherein the event queue interface includes a plurality of event queue servers for receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of third parties to provide a plurality of telephony sessions.

21. The system of 20, wherein the plurality of event queue servers dispatch the plurality of requests to the plurality of telephony servers based on a semi-randomized selection biased toward low load telephony servers.

22. The system of Claim 15, further including an accounting interface for capturing a status of the telephony session.

23. A system for providing a telephony session, the method including:

means for receiving an electronic mail request from a third party to provide the telephony session;

means for calling a customer in accordance with the request;

means for accessing a URL providing a VoiceXML application in accordance with the request;

means for running the VoiceXML application when the customer answers; and

means for responding to an interaction with the customer during the telephony session.

24. The system of Claim 23, wherein the means for receiving includes an SMTP gateway interface.

25. The system of Claim 23, further including means for storing the status of the telephony session for access by the third party.

26. The system of Claim 25, wherein the means for storing comprises a database and a server providing Internet access.

27. The system of Claim 23, further including means for monitoring a plurality of telephony servers to determine availability for the telephony session.

28. The system of Claim 27, wherein the means for monitoring includes an event queue interface.

29. The system of Claim 27, further including means for scheduling the telephony session for a predetermined time.

30. The system of Claim 29, wherein the means for scheduling includes a database regarding the customer.

31. The system of Claim 29, wherein the means for scheduling includes a database provided by the third party.

32. The system of Claim 27, further including means for prioritizing a plurality of telephony sessions.

33. The system of Claim 27, further including means for receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of third parties to provide a plurality of telephony sessions.

34. The system of Claim 33, wherein the means for receiving a plurality of requests includes a plurality of HTML servers.

35. The system of 27, further including means for capturing a status of the telephony session.

36. The system of Claim 23, further including means for determining whether the request passes a policy check.

37. The system of Claim 36, further including means for receiving the policy check from the third party.

38. The system of Claim 36, further including means for receiving the policy check from the customer.

39. The system of Claim 36, further including means for receiving the policy check from a receiver of the request.

40. The system of Claim 23, further including means for reformatting the request for processing.

41. A method of allowing an intermediate party to facilitate an interactive telephony session between a third party and a customer, the method comprising:

receiving an electronic request for the interactive telephony session from the third party;

determining if the request passes a policy check, wherein the policy check is set by at least one of the third party, the customer, and the intermediate party; and

initiating the interactive telephony session with the customer if the request passes the policy check.

42. The method of Claim 41, wherein the policy check includes confirming required resources.

43. The method of Claim 42, wherein confirming required resources includes determining whether an associated file is attached to the request.

44. The method of Claim 42, wherein confirming required resources includes determining whether an associated file is referenced in the request.

45. The method of Claim 41, wherein the policy check includes rejecting any request for the session to be placed or not placed during certain hours.

46. The method of Claim 41, wherein the policy check includes limiting a number of sessions that a customer receives in a predetermined time period.

47. The method of Claim 41, wherein the policy check includes load management.

48. The method of Claim 47, wherein load management includes modifying a selection process of a plurality of telephony servers.

49. The method of Claim 47, wherein load management includes determining a load-balancing scheme.

50. The method of Claim 47, wherein load management includes maximizing a number of simultaneous sessions as a percentage of capacity.

51. The method of Claim 47, wherein load management includes providing traffic-smoothing parameters.

52. The method of Claim 41, wherein the policy check includes security maintenance.

53. The method of Claim 52, wherein security maintenance includes considering at least one of request origin authentication, request integrity, and request confidentiality.

54. The method of Claim 53, wherein security maintenance includes using message digest authentication including a portion of the request.

55. A computerized method for providing an interactive telephony session, the method comprising:
calling a customer pursuant to an occurrence of a triggering event;
executing a software program responsive to a voice input when the customer answers; and
responding to a voice input of the customer during the interactive telephony session.

56. The method of Claim 55, wherein the triggering event is an email message.

57. The method of Claim 55, wherein the triggering event is an HTTP request.

58. The method of Claim 55, wherein the triggering event is upon reaching a predetermined time and data.

59. The method of Claim 55, wherein the software program includes VoiceXML.

60. The method of Claim 55, wherein the step of responding includes connecting the customer to a third party.

61. The method of Claim 55, wherein the step of responding includes contacting a third party with information from the interactive telephony session.

62. A method for providing a telephony session, the method including:

receiving an HTTP request from a third party to provide the telephony session;

calling a customer in accordance with the request;

accessing a URL providing a VoiceXML application in accordance with the request;

running the VoiceXML application when the customer answers; and

responding to an interaction with the customer during the telephony session.

63. The method of Claim 62, further including storing the status of the telephony session for access by the third party.

64. The method of Claim 62, further including monitoring a plurality of telephony servers to determine availability for the telephony session.

65. The method of Claim 64, further including scheduling the telephony session for a predetermined time.

66. The method of Claim 64, further including prioritizing a plurality of telephony sessions.

67. The method of Claim 64, further including receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of third parties to provide a plurality of telephony sessions.

68. The method of Claim 67, wherein the plurality of requests are dispatched to the plurality of telephony servers based on a semi-randomized selection process biased toward low load telephony servers.

69. The method of Claim 64, further including capturing a status of the telephony session.

70. The method of Claim 62, further including determining whether the request passes a policy check.

71. The method of Claim 70, wherein the policy check is set by the third party.

72. The method of Claim 70, wherein the policy check is set by the customer.

73. The method of Claim 70, wherein the policy check is set by a receiver of the request.